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Executive Summary

The Assembly Select Committee on Low Performing Schools has focused exclusively on the distribution of teachers in California and how to alleviate the problem of disproportionate numbers of uncredentialed teachers teaching in low performing schools. In our quest to address this issue, we looked closely at four key areas:

- Attracting credentialed teachers to our lowest performing schools
- Whether credentialing programs effect the distribution of teachers in California.
- Retention of teacher's in low performing schools.
- Administrator quality

The first hearing, on September 29 in Sacramento, provided an overview of the documented research describing the unequal distribution of non-credentialed teachers, and underscored the multiple challenges we face in attracting and retaining qualified teachers to low performing schools. Issues ranged from teacher salaries and the high cost of housing in many urban areas to the inadequate and/or dysfunctional personnel systems of some districts.

The second hearing, on October 28 in Los Angeles, focused on traditional and alternative credentialing programs, and whether they prepare teachers to succeed in more challenged environments. The most significant finding from this hearing was the serious lack of mentors to guide prospective teachers through alternative credentialing programs. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing reports that of the 28,000 emergency permitted teachers in California, only 5,800 received support through the pre-internship program. This hearing also revealed that there is no uniform curriculum that prepares prospective teachers for the unique experience of teaching in more challenging

environments. Nor are there adequate incentive programs to attract teachers to the field initially.

The third hearing, on November 4 in Oakland, addressed retention, specifically how to help beginning teachers in challenged schools succeed and avoid burnout. We found a lack of sufficient support exists to assure that all new teachers, especially those in challenged environments, receive the benefit of intensive training. Professor Linda Darling-Hammond from Stanford University testified that of the 68% of new teachers assigned to a mentor, only 16% see a mentor more than once a month. Consistent testimony from the hearing indicated that many teachers in urban and rural environments do not feel that they have sufficient collaborative time with other teachers and/or mentors.

The last hearing, on December 8 in Sacramento, focused on the quality of administrators and the importance of the role they play in retaining teachers in schools with the most challenges. Principals are bearing a greater load of accountability with California's new education reform legislation, and as the demands of the job rise, so do the demands for qualified administrators. The most noteworthy finding was that new principals receive virtually no mentoring or other type of support. Just as beginning teachers need intensive professional development and assessment, the same type of support must be provided to new site administrators in order to build on the preparation that precedes initial administrative certification and to transform academic preparation into practical success managing the school site, working with teachers in the classroom, and providing a high quality academic program to all pupils.

If California is going to raise academic standards we must, at the very least, also ensure that a highly qualified, credentialed teacher is in every classroom. Without fulfilling this basic

need, our most vulnerable children will not have the opportunity to develop into productive members of our society, and California will not realize its vision for a brighter future.

Attracting Qualified, Credentialed Teachers to California's

Lowest Performing Schools

Findings

Unanticipated Impact of Class Size Reduction

Though class size reduction has been positive for many schools across the state, there has also been an unanticipated impact on our lowest performing schools. As teaching positions became available in higher achieving, more attractive schools, many teachers left the more challenged schools to fill those vacancies -- leaving poor urban and rural schools with a significant teacher shortage. As a result of class size reduction, combined with student population increases and teacher attrition, there are more emergency permits being requested than ever before, five times more for elementary classrooms than prior to class size reduction. Specifically there were over 28,000 multiple subject emergency permits requested by school districts this year, up from about 6,000 prior to class size reduction.

Many districts found that the cost of creating smaller classes exceeded their class size reduction revenues. This was particularly the case for districts with the most low-income, minority, or English Language Learner students. Not surprisingly, schools with the highest percentage of low-income, minority, or English Language Learner students were unable to attract as highly qualified teachers as other schools. Statewide, the K-3 teacher workforce increased by 38%, but the overall qualifications of K-3 teachers declined.

Who is Teaching our Children?

Over 1 million students attend schools where more than 75% receive free or reduced lunch, which is one of the most significant indicators of poverty. 16% of the teachers in these schools are underqualified. There are more underqualified teachers in this group than any other. In testimony by Margaret Gaston, Co-Director of The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, she reported the following:

- 1 in every 8 California school districts (120) have more than 20% uncredentialed teachers.

- In 24% of California's public schools, there are no uncredentialed teachers; in 20% of the schools, 1 in every 5 teachers is uncredentialed.
- 1 in every 10 classrooms in the state is staffed by an underqualified teacher.
- 37% of urban schools have more than 20% uncredentialed teachers in their classrooms.

Other experts on our panel confirmed what Ms. Gaston reported by making it clear that it is our poorest children, arguably those who need quality teaching the most, who are the most likely to have an underqualified teacher. The following represents the statistics presented:

- In some schools, more than 50% of the teachers are novice teachers serving on emergency permits, intern permits, or waivers. In one major, urban California school district, 75% of the new hires were less than qualified teachers.
- 1 in every 4 special education teachers is serving on an emergency permit.
- 7,300 individuals are serving on intern credentials or certificates, and more than 6,000 on waivers. This does not count substitutes serving on emergency permits.

The committee also learned that there may be reverse incentives for school districts to hire emergency permit holders. In most cases, emergency permit holders are hired by districts because these districts cannot attract credentialed teachers, but in some situations districts hire emergency permit holders because emergency permit holders: 1. Can be paid less. 2. Need not initially be provided with benefits. 3. Cannot be placed on a tenure track. 4. Can be dismissed easily. 5. Need not be provided with systematic support and assistance (except for pre-interns).

Teacher Qualifications and Student Achievement

The committee heard testimony that clearly illustrates the impact of teacher qualifications on student achievement. Except for home and family factors (such as parent education, income, and language background) the qualifications of the teacher have the greatest influence on student learning and academic performance. For example, the Journal of Teacher Education reported in an article entitled, "*Certification: It Does Matter*," that students taught by teachers who have their certification in Mathematics achieved test score gains of 5.33 points, compared to students taught by teachers not certified in Mathematics whose

scores increased by only 1.12 points. Stanford University Professor Linda Darling-Hammond is a nationally recognized expert in the area of urban and rural education, made the following points that further demonstrate the profound influence high quality teachers have on student performance.

- The strongest predictor of state-level student achievement in reading and mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Performance was each state's proportion of well-qualified teachers.
- A full 25% of the variance in student test scores in reading and math is directly attributable to whether teachers hold a teaching credential rather than an emergency permit.
- Differences in teacher qualifications (educational degrees, certification status, and experience) accounted for approximately 90% of the total variation in student achievement in reading and mathematics at all grade levels tested.

Legislative Recommendations to Attract Quality, Credentialed Teachers to Our Most Challenged Schools

- Funding should be allocated to districts with schools who rank at the bottom 25%, in terms of student performance, to be used toward devising their own plan to attract and retain quality, credentialed teachers. The program should include a menu of choices that these districts could choose from to increase the percentage of fully credentialed teachers to these schools. This menu should include, but not be limited to, increasing teacher salaries, moving teachers to a 12 month contract to allow for an increased amount of professional development, salary differentials, equipment allowances, tax credits to compensate for the high cost of living in many areas, funding to make restructuring the daily schedule possible to allow for daily teacher collaboration, compensation for additional teacher responsibilities and duties, housing subsidies, loan forgiveness, and funding to increase the number of support providers all teachers have access to in the school.
- Phase in restrictions on the percentage of uncredentialed teachers assigned in any school, and the ratio of beginning teachers to veterans in any school.
- Require that the resources targeted for teacher salaries be spent only on credentialed teachers.
- Provide funding to increase the number of reading certificate holders in California who are trained to diagnose and assist struggling readers at an early age.

- Encourage school districts to streamline hiring practices, providing early notice to prospective employees about job availability, using successful models, such as New Haven Unified and San Diego Unified School Districts.
- Provide resources for trained multilingual aides to assist with English language learners.
- Amend the new beginning teacher salary law so that it does not exacerbate existing gaps among districts in their ability to attract and retain fully prepared teachers.
- Streamline teacher recruitment of out of state teachers from states with teacher surpluses.

Traditional and Alternative Teacher Credentialing Programs

Findings

The Supply and Demand of Qualified Teachers in California

California needs approximately 25,000 newly credentialed teachers a year to go into teaching over the next ten years in order to keep up with growth in student population, the impact of class size reduction, and current levels of teacher attrition. Currently, California issues 27,000 new credentials annually. Unfortunately, 40% of the teachers prepared in conventional programs do not go into teaching. Compounding the need for qualified teachers in California, another 50% of new teachers who do go into teaching leave the profession within the first five years of their new career. This committee focused on the issue of teacher credentialing programs to explore whether or not this high rate of attrition was attributable to poor or inadequate training.

Current Teacher Credentialing Programs that Serve to Train Teachers to Teach in Challenged Schools

- **District and University Internship Programs**

This program provides on-the-job training to 7,900 potential teachers across the state that are working toward their teaching credential. The interns receive supervised, on-the job preparation following an intensive 120-hour pre-service program. Over 12,600 interns have been prepared over the past five years. The retention rate has held at more than 88% for the past five years, and 83% are teaching in the same schools that they conducted their internship.

Unfortunately this program is underfunded compared to the BTSA Program. BTSA can provide stipends of \$1,500 for each support provider; the Intern program can only provide stipends of \$500. In addition, 1/8th of the Intern's Salary is deducted for supervision costs, which appears to be providing an incentive for districts to hire emergency permit holders before interns, and for candidates to become emergency permit holders rather than interns. This program is lacking sufficient support providers, and as a result it is currently at capacity in some districts.

- The Pre-Internship Program

The Pre-Internship Program places emergency permit holders into cohort groups where they receive support, assistance and advising. It takes teachers who have already been recruited to work in hard to staff schools, and helps them become fully prepared. This program has an impressive 83% retention rate.

This program is currently reaching only a fraction of emergency permit holders. Panelists reported that *only 5,800 out of 20,000 emergency permit holders are participating in the program*. One of the problems is that the funding level is not sufficient to pay Pre-Intern Support Providers at the same level as BTSA support providers, hence there is an inadequate number of support providers available.

- The Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

The Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program provides a career ladder that enables aides to become teachers. There is a special emphasis on recruiting candidates to serve limited English speaking students and special education students. Those who participate in the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program already live and work in the community. 82% of the participants are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and there is an extraordinary 100% retention rate. To date 195 paraprofessionals have become fully credentialed teachers.

- The Assumption Program of Loans for Educators (APLE)

The APLE program provides forgivable loans to candidates enrolled in conventional teacher preparation programs. The recipients of the APLE loan agree to teach for 4 years in a public school serving a low-income population, or in a subject matter shortage area. The loan amount is currently capped at \$11,000. 3,800 of the awards have been given out to date, and there are 700 awards still available. A remarkable 94% of APLE recipients are still teaching in the same subject or low-income school that they originally selected.

One weakness of the APLE program is that individuals are selected for participation in APLE *after* the teacher has enrolled in a credentialing program. Because APLE awards are given out after the teacher has enrolled in a credentialing program, APLE is not doing all it can to work as an incentive to enter credentialing programs. In addition, not all of the available awards have been given out. Over 700 of the 4,500 are still available.

- CalState TEACH

Cal State TEACH is designed especially to serve the needs of emergency permit holders as they move to full credential status. It is school site based with CSU faculty visiting participants in their classrooms for observation and feedback.

Legislative Recommendations to Improve Current Teacher Credentialing Programs

The Assembly Select Committee on Low Performing Schools heard compelling, statistically based, testimony that demonstrated the absolute need to increase the hands on training and mentorship support that potential and new teachers receive. Data clearly demonstrates that the quality of education a potential teacher receives directly transmits into a higher quality of teaching for our children and a longer teaching career for the teacher. In many credentialing programs there is not sufficient funding available to ensure that all aspiring teachers are given the type of training and support that they need to be successful. The Committee recommends that we change this reality in the following ways.

- District and University Internship Programs

- Provide additional funding for support, while eliminating the provision allowing an intern's salary to be reduced to pay for his/her support.
- Pave the way for more retired teachers to serve as support providers by lifting the earning cap for retirees so that they may serve as support providers in low performing schools.

- The Pre-Internship Program

- Provide additional funding for support to ensure that all emergency permit holders are given the necessary ongoing support and training.
- Pave the way for more retired teachers to serve as support providers by lifting the earning cap for retirees serving as support providers in low performing schools.
- Address the issue of distribution among schools by encouraging districts to distribute interns and emergency permit holders across the district, phasing in a cap of 20% at any given school.
- Target funding to colleges and universities who will provide intensive preparation, support and assistance to emergency permit teachers.

- The Assumption Program of Loans for Educators (APLE)
 - Provide for APLE outreach and recruitment earlier, during the first years of the college experience.
 - Link recruitment into APLE with any high school recruitment efforts underway so that APLE serves to recruit students into teaching.

Additional Recommendations

- Amend Cal Grant T Program, a scholarship that goes to those in teacher credentialing programs, to require at least a portion of these scholarship recipients serve in challenged school settings or high need subject matter areas.
- Target funding for Institution's of Higher Education willing to expand programs in high need subject areas at times and places that are more accessible to candidates.
- Provide targeted funding for colleges and universities to develop and implement teacher preparation programs designed to attract, prepare and retain teachers for low performing schools.
- Step up the capacity of teacher training institutions to prepare teachers and to support, through placement of qualified teachers, inadequately staffed schools by granting resources to colleges and universities that are located in areas with high concentrations of inadequately staffed schools. These grants must devise a comprehensive plan for preparing and placing prospective teachers in inadequately staffed schools.
- Candidates preparing for their credentials at these targeted sites should be granted forgivable loans of \$20,000 per year, plus tuition, fees, and books, provided that they accept employment and stay in a challenged school for 4 years.
- Provide additional incentives for teaching candidates such as Cal TEACH and focus them on shortage fields, including math, science, special education and technology.

Decreasing Teacher Burnout and Retaining Credentialed Teachers in California's Lowest Performing Schools

Findings

New teachers often begin their careers under difficult conditions: challenging classrooms, isolation from colleagues, and little or no feedback about their teaching performance. It is during this critical transition period that teachers learn to meld their academic knowledge with the everyday practice of teaching. It is also the period in which many teachers decide whether or not to continue to pursue teaching as a career. Many teachers, research shows, choose not to continue. Attrition rates among new teachers in California are extremely high. It is estimated that 30% of new teachers leave the profession within their first 3 years of services; figures go as high as 50% in certain parts of the state. Teacher burnout is an especially urgent matter we must address if we are going to ensure that our lowest performing schools are providing quality teaching to our most vulnerable children.¹

The Assembly Select Committee on Low Performing Schools listened to testimony from experts in the area of teacher training and support in an attempt to discover what is important to teachers. This committee wanted to know what needed to be changed so that new and veteran teachers alike receive the support they need to transform teaching into a joy rather than a burden, and so that they are able to succeed at their job and provide a quality learning experience for their students.

What is Important to Teachers When Choosing a School?

Like all of us, teachers need and deserve to be paid a living wage. Professor Linda Darling-Hammond reported that California ranks 44th in the country in terms of the share of the education dollars that are spent on salaries. Though California ranks 19th in the country in terms of the level of beginning teacher salaries, California spends only 44% of the share of education dollars on salaries compared to the 80% of the education dollars that are spent generally across the nation. In addition, there are strong disparities in starting salaries for new teachers across the state. For example, Oakland Unified School District, where the cost of

¹ The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning

living is high, pays their new teachers just \$27,000 a year compared to the neighboring New Haven Unified School District which pays their new teachers \$35,000 annually.

Studies show that in states that have equalized salaries across their state, adjusting for cost of living differentials and adjusting for the cost to meet the needs of pupils with different challenges, the result is that there is little disparity with regard to the distribution of credentialed teachers. In addition, those states spend closer to 50% of their education dollars on teacher salary freeing up needed money for other important programs. Conversely, in California where salaries vary from district to district, there is great disparity with regard to the distribution of credentialed teachers. The consequence of this disparity is that our poorest, most vulnerable children are more likely to be taught by our least experienced and emergency permitted teachers.

Teachers need to be able to support themselves. Linda Bond, the Director of Governmental Affairs for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, reported that teachers not only need to be able to afford to buy homes, they do not want to drive more than 25 miles to the school where they teach. Like Oakland, there are many districts throughout California that have a critical need for credentialed teachers, but whose salaries will not support those teachers well enough to live in the area due to the high cost of living.

Teachers want to work in a professional environment. All panelists agreed that, like most professionals, teachers need their environment to be conducive to teaching and learning. Overcrowded facilities and year-round school schedules provide special challenge to attracting and keeping well-trained, qualified teachers. In addition, their workload needs to be manageable. In districts that retain their teachers, beginning teachers are given fewer numbers of preparations, more support, lower number of students and fewer duties.

Teachers want to work with other teachers. Many teachers experience feelings of isolation. They do not have enough time in their day to problem-solve with their colleagues. Some schools have successfully altered their schedule to allow up to five hours a week of planning among teachers.

Teachers want to work in schools with experienced teachers. Margaret Gaston, the Co-Director of the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, testified that there are too few veteran teachers and other support providers to usher novices into the profession, especially in the most challenged schools in the state.

When a school is populated by more than 20% of its staff by unqualified teachers, that school becomes dysfunctional, or unable to provide the support their teaching staff needs to succeed. Not only are there not enough mentor teachers to learn from, but the teacher's professional culture is affected. The image that "anyone can come in here and teach" is projected which lowers the morale amongst the teaching staff.

Teachers want to work in schools that have highly trained quality administrators. Margaret Gaston went on to say that teachers are much more likely to stay in schools where they are able to have input in professional decisions. Urban and rural teachers generally have less opportunity to give their input. In addition, teachers in high poverty schools report less satisfaction with their administrators willingness to support them in taking risks, their personal interest in the professional development of teachers, and their effort to ensure that teachers have the time and resources to enrich the content or to try new methods of instruction, which are all conditions teachers report as being conducive to thriving professional communities and higher student achievement.

Legislative Recommendations to Retain Teachers in Our Lowest Performing Schools

- Provide funding to districts with large numbers of uncredentialed teachers to provide incentives for retired teachers and others to serve as mentors, support providers, and trainers for emergency permitted teachers.
- Focus special attention for new teacher support at inadequately staffed schools sites with insufficient numbers of experienced teachers by locating support providers where the highest concentrations of new teachers are.
- Create a structure of incentives and support, beginning with an increase in beginning teacher salary, to attract and keep qualified teachers in the profession with special emphasis on inadequately staffed schools.
- Provide incentives for master teachers, or exemplary teachers who oversee and mentor student teachers, to teach in challenged schools.
- Provide funding to be used to reschedule class schedules to allow for daily collaboration with colleagues.
- Phase out the approval of waivers and emergency permits over the next 5 years, allowing waiver of credential requirement only in exceptional cases.
- Aggressively seek reciprocity with those states that have high quality training and licensure programs.

- Provide flexibility in implementing Class Size Reduction in districts with large numbers of under-prepared teachers.
- Require districts, especially those with high concentrations of inadequately staffed schools, must regularly review and refine district hiring and placement practices.
- Expand professional development opportunities and support for teachers already in the profession. The pool of accomplished, veteran teachers must be increased in order to accommodate the load of novice teachers.
- Expand the reach of the California Subject Matter Projects in those areas where there are inadequately staffed schools.
- Expand support to all new teachers, not just BTSA eligible credential holders, through the use of PAR and professional development resources.
- Expand BTSA funding, specifically for our most challenged schools, to provide ongoing, regular mentorship to all newly credentialed and emergency permitted teachers.
- Augment BTSA at these schools with priority going to the identification and preparation of accomplished teachers in proportion to the number of novice teachers.
- Establish an overall statewide goal of at least one National Board for Professional Teacher Standards teacher at each inadequately staffed school.

Attracting and Retaining Quality Administrators to Our

Lowest Performing Schools

Findings

The Assembly Select Committee on Low Performing Schools made administrator quality the focus of their final hearing in Sacramento. It was the Committee's intention discover why there is a principal shortage in California and what the state can do to ensure that administrator vacancies are filled with enthusiastic leaders who can use their skills to attract and retain quality teachers to their schools.

In a 1998 joint study of principals by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, close to half of the districts surveyed reported a shortage of qualified candidates for principal position vacancies. The beginning site administrator's career is a critical time in which it is necessary that intensive professional development and assessment occur. It is critical for the state's reforms related to pupil and school accountability to succeed. For this success to be realized, school site administrators must be well trained and fully prepared to provide leadership in school assessment, school accountability, and classroom management. It is also vital that administrators be prepared to meet the challenges of improving low performing schools by improving the quality of work of both pupils and teachers.

Barriers to Administrator Success

According to virtually all the panelists, there are many factors that discourage potential administrator applicants and contribute to principal burnout. The single largest factor was that the salary/compensation for the position is not considered adequate in comparison to the level of responsibility. In some cases, senior teachers make more than the principal does. In addition to salary; factors that dissuade applicants from applying for administrator positions include the lack of support they receive, feelings of isolation, job-related stress and the time demands that come with the job. Many panelists reported that much of the school administrator's time is spent on student discipline, when it would be better spent focusing on the teaching and learning occurring in the school.

Administrators receive very little training. In fact, in most cases, an administrator has absolutely no hands-on training prior to going into his/her own school. Without sufficient time working in a school under a mentor administrator, it is unrealistic to expect a new principal to be able to manage all the details of running a school *and* be held accountable for raising the academic performance of his/her students.

**Legislative Recommendations to Attract and Retain Quality Administrators to
Our Lowest Performing Schools**

- Require, as part of the their academic training, potential administrator's to spend a significant amount of time serving an on-site internship.
- Provide first and second year administrators with mentoring to assist them in all aspects of their job including, but not limited to, time management, pupil discipline, assessment of the performance of teachers and pupils etc. to ensure that new administrators attain an acceptable level of professional competence prior to working on their own.
- Give administrators the power and flexibility to use state funds as they see fit holding them accountable for attaining new state standards.
- Develop and fund new doctoral programs through the California State University and University of California systems in high need areas.
- Increase Administrator salaries.

Conclusion

The Assembly Select Committee on Low Performing Schools has identified several key issues that contribute to the unequal distribution of credentialed teachers across California. The committee heard a variety of recommendations from teachers, principals, superintendents, researchers, and academics. It is this committee's expectation that these recommendations will serve as a tool for policymakers to draft legislation that will address an issue even more important than class size reduction in terms of student performance: teacher quality. We must ensure that *all* students have a full opportunity to maximize their potential. Studies show that they will not be able to do that if we do not commit to providing, at the very least, a highly qualified, fully credentialed teacher in every single classroom across the state.